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Department of State

TELEGRAM

CONTROL: 6699

DATE: Sep. 11, 1970  
1930

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INDICATE:

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☐ CHARGE TO

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OF AMERICA

OCT 22 1970

BELEM, PARA, BRAZIL

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ACTION: SECSTATE WASHDC

INFO: AMEMBASSY BRASILIA  
AMCONSUL RECIFE  
AMCONSUL SAO PAULO  
USCINCSO

RIO DE JANEIRO 6699

CINCSO FOR POLAD  
MARANHÃO TORTURE REPORT

SUBJECT: ~~/MARANHÃO TORTURE REPORT~~

REF: BRASILIA A-30, RECIFE REPORT 28, RIO 6500

1. CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF NATIONAL COUNCIL OF BRAZILIAN BISHOPS  
BEGAN MEETING IN RIO YESTERDAY, OFFICIAL PURPOSE OF WHICH TO  
DISCUSS SUBJECTS LEFT UNFINISHED AT BRASILIA MEETING LAST MAY.  
APPARENT FROM PRESS, HOWEVER, THAT MAJOR EMPHASIS AT MEETING  
BEING GIVEN TO MORE CURRENT TOPICS -- SPECIFICALLY, ALLEGED  
TORTURE OF MARANHÃO PRIEST AND CRIMES OF DEATH SQUADS. PRESS  
REPORTS COUNCIL ESTABLISHED TWO WORKING GROUPS TO STUDY THESE  
SUBJECTS.

2. BISHOP OF SAN LUIS, JOÃO BATISTA MOTA, REPORTEDLY SAID AT  
MEETING THAT HE AND BISHOP AVELAR BRANDÃO VILELA OF TERESINA  
MARANHÃO  
HAD VISITED PRIEST MONTEIRO IN PRISON AND CONFIRMED HIS BAD

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BY:

POL: DPMatthews: ael  
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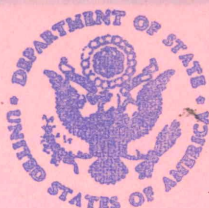
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4-68





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ACTION:

TREATMENT BY POLICE; AFTER WHICH THEY IMMEDIATELY INFORMED APOSTOLIC NUNCIO IN RIO. MOTA REPORTED ON SERIES OF MEETINGS HE HAD HELD AFTERWARDS WITH PRESIDENT, MINISTER OF JUSTICE, AND MILITARY AUTHORITIES ABOUT IMPRISONMENT OF PRIEST. HE URGED COUNCIL TAKE URGENT DECISION ON MATTER. ACCORDING TO COUNCIL PRESS SPOKESMAN, COPY OF NORTHEAST BISHOPS' DOCUMENT DENOUNCING THE TORTURE OF PRIESTS HAS BEEN RECEIVED BY POPE.

3. BISHOPS' DECISION TO INQUIRE INTO PRIEST'S ALLEGED TORTURE COMES ON HEELS OF SEPTEMBER 8 PRESS STATEMENT BY GENERAL VALTER PIRES DE CARVALHO E ALBUQUERQUE THAT ON INSTRUCTIONS OF PRESIDENT TO DETERMINE ABSOLUTE TRUTH IN THE MATTER, HE HAD CONDUCTED INVESTIGATION WHICH REVEALED NEITHER OF TWO MARANHÃO PRIESTS ARRESTED HAD BEEN TORTURED. HE SAID ABRASIONS ON MONTEIRO WERE MADE BY HANDCUFFS DURING EIGHT-HOUR RIDE IN JEEP OVER ROUGH ROAD UPON BEING TAKEN TO PRISON FACILITIES IN SAO LUIS. PIRES EXHIBITED PHOTO SHOWING ABRASIONS AND MADE POINT THAT LEGS SHOWED NO MARKS, WHICH WOULD NOT BE CASE IF MONTEIRO HAD BEEN SUSPENDED FROM A BEAM WITH HIS LEGS AND

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ACTION:

HANDS TIED TOGETHER AS WAS CHARGED. PIRES REFERRED TO MONTEIRO AND HIS SUPERIORS AS LIARS. HE SAID MONTEIRO AND PRIEST XAVIER HAD ADMITTED IN STATEMENTS TO POLICE THAT THEY BELONGED TO AÇÃO POPULAR TERRORIST GROUP AND HAD MAINTAINED CONTACTS WITH SUBVERSIVES.

4. O GLOBO SEPT. 4 PUBLISHED STRONG EDITORIAL CALLING FOR INVESTIGATION MARANHÃO TORTURE REPORT (RIO 6500). ON DAY FOLLOWING EDITORIAL O GLOBO SAID IN FRONT PAGE STATEMENT THAT RELIABLE SOURCE HAD INFORMED IT INVESTIGATION HAD TAKEN PLACE WHICH PROVED NONEXISTENCE OF ANY ILL TREATMENT OF PRIEST.

5. COMMENT: ~~GOING ON BASIS OF PUBLIC DENIAL STATE GOV~~  
~~DIRECTOR OF FEDERAL POLICE, GENERAL PIRES, THAT MONTEIRO~~  
~~MARANHÃO PRIESTS ARRESTED WAS TORTURED,~~ ACTION BY COUNCIL QUESTIONING THIS DENIAL COULD LEAD TO INCREASED CHURCH-GOB FRICTION AND THREATEN REPORTED INFORMAL UNDERSTANDING (RIO 5239). NCBB ACTION (LIKE RECENT O GLOBO EDITORIAL) INDICATES BELIEF THAT SIMPLE DENIAL OF OCCURRENCE OF TORTURES NO LONGER SUFFICIENT RESPONSE BY AUTHORITIES.

BOONSTRA

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